



PRESS RELEASE

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PEAKS REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN CENTRAL ASIA

**December 15-17, 2006
“Raduga” resort, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyz Republic**

ISSYK-KUL, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC – From December 15-17, 2006 a regional conference on school governance gathered over seventy representatives of the Ministries of Education and Finance, local authorities, schools, and national and international organizations from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan at the “Raduga” Resort, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan. At the conference, organized by the USAID-funded Participation, Education, and Knowledge Project (PEAKS), participants reviewed and discussed draft policy guidelines on “Community Participation in Education Decision Making,” developed on the basis of the PEAKS experience in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The guidelines will be finalized and published in line with the conference participants’ comments and recommendations, and serve as a tool for key policy makers to institutionalize community mobilization approaches in school education across PEAKS target countries.

The conference included representatives from comparable projects and education reform in Armenia, Georgia, and Russia who presented their best practice and experience on school–community partnership and its impact on education reform. In addition, participants reviewed and discussed national and legal frameworks related to community participation in school education and made recommendations to improve the environment, and thereby enable community and local involvement in contributing to effective education reform.

The USAID-funded PEAKS project is implemented in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It aims to assist these countries in creating quality education for all through strengthened teaching corps, increased parental and community involvement in education decision making, and improved education financing and management systems. Examples of PEAKS activities in Kyrgyzstan include training in effective teaching methodologies for teachers of public schools and trainers of the Kyrgyz Academy of Education, and the pilot in education finance reform in Tokmok, Chui Oblast. The consortium implementing PEAKS consists of the Academy for Educational Development, the Open Society Institute, Save the Children Alliance, and Abt Associates Inc. The project began in January 2003 for three years initially and was later extended through June 2007 with the aim of increasing the sustainability of outcomes in all countries.

PEAKS is one of the many projects funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, on behalf of the American people. Since 1992, the American people through USAID have brought over \$1.5 billion to the five republics of Central Asia, in programs that assist education, healthcare, economic growth, and democratic institutions in these countries.